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VOL. 01 | ISSUE 02

DRAVIDIAN MEDIA'S

EYECON

JUNE 2008

Behind Bars: True story

Life and DEATH... in the hands of our youth?

Teenage pregnancy and gun violence

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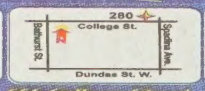

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Positive Influence

Every child grows up with big dreams; he or she may wish to become a pilot, police officer, teacher, firefighter etc. A teenager does not take it upon himself to become a thief or murderer and a girl at the age of twelve does not wish to become a victim of a sexually transmitted disease or bear a child.

Gun violence and teenage pregnancy are two issues that are affecting the teenagers of today. Whether the choice is to pick up a gun or have sexual intercourse, the young individuals are making life altering decisions. More sadly, they are oblivious to the consequences of their actions. Even with the guidance from parents, teachers and counselors a handful of students are finding themselves in helpless situations.

Majority of parents blame the media for the corrupt behavior of the young adolescents of today. It is important to keep in mind that media has been a part of human development for more than 100 years and people have been influenced and even inspired by the things they saw on television. However, it is evident that today's music videos and movies glamorize gun violence. Unfortunately students face a lot of social pressures such as wearing cool clothes and being popular. In this day and age the behavior among preteens is influenced by what they see on television that starts with music videos which are then religiously adapted into school yards. For example it is "cool" to get shot nine times and still be alive to write an album about it. It is also not a big deal to have sexual intercourse at the age of fifteen because 'everyone is doing it'.

We cannot let Toronto become the ground zero of infectious diseases such as aids and gun violence. It is also important to keep in mind that even if it is only a small minority of youth population that are holding lethal weapons, it is crucial that we address the issue since it pertains to the health of our city. Keep in mind that the vast majority of the youth are kind, career-driven individuals. These young individuals are working with teacher, guidance counselors and police officers to better enhance the life of their peers.

We hope that our readers are enlightened by this issue of The Eyecon. Furthermore, we hope that this paper reaches out to those who are in need of guidance.

Ines.I
editor@theeyecon.com

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Disclaimer:
Our goal is to become your favourite youth information paper by providing you the information, services and product offerings that are most relevant to you. All the articles are displayed with an objective of giving the reader the latest of what's happening. Eyecon refers to many newspapers and publications (both print and online editions) and due credit is attributed to the source. Eyecon assumes no liability for any inaccurate, delayed, omission or incomplete information, nor for any actions taken in reliance thereon. Information & articles supplied by an individual, organization, or firm has been supplied by such individual, organization or firm without any verification by us.

Rebellion as a Statement of Independence

When I was growing up, my teenage counterparts were skip roping and playing hopscotch in our school playground. Our biggest worry was what time the teacher was going to let us out for recess – then. Now, teenagers are having sex for extra-curricular fun and worrying about missing their periods…for the wrong reasons.

Our youngsters are growing up ahead of their time and are enjoying it. Many researchers have attributed this to the media and negative external influences. They blame these sources for encouraging promiscuous behavior. However, this is not always true. The media, with its power to brainwash even the smartest of people, does not condone inappropriate behavior. We can see this in the most recent incident with Miley Cyrus – pictures of the 15 year old billionaire and role model to young girls posing with bare shoulders and back graced the tabloids; pictures of her sitting on a male friend with her revealed midriff were also available for viewing on the internet. Even with the extensive coverage this incident has received, this is not seen as a favorable act, in fact, she has been reportedly 'grounded' by Walt Disney and told to 'lay low' for a few months. Actions like this are feared in the industry – production companies of celebrities like Miley worry that it will damage her squeaky clean reputation that they are banking on – and it did. How many parents want their children idolizing a girl who chose to pose so provocatively in a popular magazine? – Not many.

However, are these young girls promiscuous or simply using these actions as a statement of independence? Young teen idols like Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Hillary Duff eventually break under the pressure of having to paint a certain picture of themselves to the media. This eventual meltdown follows with a 'I just don't care anymore!' attitude and results in a sharp change of image like in Christina Aguilera's extreme 'Dirty' video.

Lets face it, women are often expected to be a certain way – virginity should be preserved until marriage, clothes should not be too revealing, etc – and if these instructions are not followed, they are labeled with the most derogatory names. Eventually, girls do crack, and then comes sexual activity and other acts of rebelliousness. These girls are often written off as not having been brought up the 'right' way or just naturally 'slutty'. But how about blaming society and the unrealistic expectations put on these youngsters?

Teens Becoming More Promiscuous or Simply Pressured into Stating their Independence?

"In earlier generations, kids weren't expected to be sexually active -- or experiment with alcohol or drugs -- until they turned 17 or 18, when they were better able to resist peer pressure, says Elkind. "Now they're getting pressure at 13 and 14, when they're too young to resist. It's not that child development has changed, it's that the demands are coming at earlier ages." *

Even with the recent increase in teenage pregnancy, ironically, there has also been a reported increase in females who pursue post secondary education. A recent statistics Canada study has revealed that a "'dramatic reversal' in the balance of sexes on Canadian university campuses. In the 1971 census, 68 per cent of 25- to 29-year-old university graduates were male. By 1991, women were a slight majority, and by

2006 they accounted for 60 per cent of graduates" **

So there is hope yet for the seem-to-be diminishing future of our youth. They are beginning to live their lives for them and not for others. Sexual activity at such a young age is not recommended but the way it is being handled should be admired. Raising a child at any age is difficult but teens of today are willing to endure it – some with a little help from their parents – but a lot choose to take on this task by themselves, regardless of whether or not the father is in the picture. People make mistakes and how they pick themselves up when they fall is all that matters.

*Jeanie Lerche Davis. Teenagers: Why Do They Rebel? http://www.webmd.com/solutions/sc/how-to-talk-to-your-teen/why-teens-rebel)
**(www.msn.ca's report on Statistics Canada's findings).

Thusha
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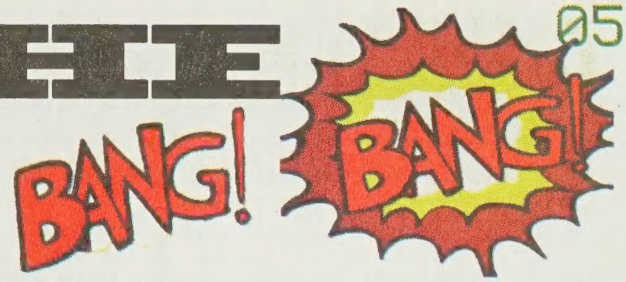

When we were children we carelessly played 'cops and robbers", a childhood game in which "bad guys" could have guns too. Yet, for majority of North American teens, this is a living nightmare. Over the past two years, the number of victims lost to gun violence has increased substantially. More appallingly, the age of the suspects range from 12-19 years old. The streets of Toronto have been hit with bullets from hand guns and pistols. To those who are unaware of weapon jargons, a handgun is a firearm small enough to be held in the hand when used. One of the most popular handguns in the GTA is the semi-automatic pistol. This powerful hand gun uses the energy of one shot to reload the chamber for the next, hence allowing another shot to take place immediately and leaving no time for thought in between the spraying of bullets.

According to Statistics Canada, there is an estimate of 635,559 legally registered, restricted, and prohibited weapons in Canada. While some parts of the U.S. allow its citizens to roam the streets with weapons, Canada has enforced strict gun laws. In 1977, the Canadian government banned fully automatic weapons and it was mandatory for all other guns to be registered. The only peopled allowed to own handguns in Canada are police officers, security officers, target shooters and collectors. Furthermore, any citizen who owns a gun must have a valid firearm license and ensure that the weapon is placed where it cannot be easily accessed.

However, Mayor David Miller along with majority of Torontonians feels that it is about time that we change the law. On April 28, 2008, David Miller stood in front of Toronto Council calling on the Federal Government to ban private ownership of handguns in Canada. The motion was supported by City Council with a 39-3 vote. According to Miller's campaign for the Canada Handgun Ban, handguns would be banned for collectors too. The Gun Strategy Report states that "a major source of illegal firearms in Canada is theft from domestic sources. This means that firearms are primarily obtained illegally from residential and commercial break-and-enters where legal guns are stored. Members of organized crime are known to identify target firearms owners, in particular those with large collections". Since guns have become easily accessible through theft, a Canada-wide ban would reduce the number of guns circulating the country. Records show that in 2006, there were almost 194,000 registered handguns and 1,993 victims of handgun violence in Ontario – Despite this, the Canadian Federal government refuses to support the handgun ban. Their position holds that there are sufficient controls in place to direct the ownership and use of handguns in Canada. However, Miller's campaign is very much supported by the public and would work favorably for RCMP, the O.P.P. as well as the Toronto Police.

The Eyecon interviewed Mr. Mark Pugash, Director of Public Information for the Toronto Police, on gun violence in the GTA. Mr. Pugash claims that "anything that makes it difficult to obtain guns is a good idea". The Toronto Police are very much involved in reducing violence in the GTA, one such program is TAVIS (Toronto Anti Violence Intervention Strategy) which was implemented in February 2006. TAVIS has brought a lot of positive feedback, "seeing a lot of police officers makes people feel safe and secure" explains Mr. Pugash. Mr. Pugash confirmed that so far in 2008, 720 fire arms, including 184 handguns, have been taken off the streets. Mr. Pugash claims that any progress made is due to the collaboration of police officers, as well as the community. "In order to put a stop to violence you cannot succeed by arresting people" says Mr. Pugash, "you have to work with people".

Even if Canada were to ban handguns, our neighbours in the south make it easier for people to illegally smuggle weapons. According to Miller's report 70% of our weapons are from the U.S. and, therefore, it is crucial that we work alongside the U.S. in banning firearms.

Yet, how realistic is it to expect the U.S. to enforce such laws upon its citizens? How far can we go in order to ensure a national ban on handguns? To this, Mark Pugash had a very optimistic reply, "There is no point is saying we cannot do much. It is worth taking measures to put an end to gun violence. One less gun makes a difference".

Ines I.

Picture 1: Eyecon Reporter interviewing Mark Pugash
Picture 2: Mr. Mark Pugash, Director of Public Information for the Toronto Police

From A Reader…

Texas Polygamy

* On March 29 2008 a 16 year old girl called child services and frighteningly whispered she was living in Yearning 0for Zion. She claimed she was a pregnant teenage mother being held against her will. She said she was wife number seven to a 50 year old man (identified as Dale Barlow) who sexually assaulted her and beat her. This young girl was a member of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Sa

* The FLDS members community in Eldorado (Texas) was established in 2003 The compound itself was built by the followers of Warren Jeffs, a FLDS pastor.

* On April 3 Texas state troopers, SWAT, FBI agents, San Angelo Police, Highway Patrol, Sheriffs department offices from 4 counties, and Child Welfare Officials raided the ranch moving in with tanks, k9 dogs, ambulances and weapons

* CPS removed 416 children from Texas compound and separated the children upon custody. Meanwhile 139 women voluntarily left the ranch

* When questioned by CPS, none of the girls from the ranch knew their birthdates

* Court documents reveal that 20 minors or more have been impregnated between the ages of 13-16.
* State officials say 25 young girls who claimed to be adults have now admitted to being minor

See Page 8

Last issues answer for samurai-sudoku!

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08 The fenced-in compound is 1,700-acre ranch with a white limestone temple and log cabin-style houses. Also had cheese making plant, cement plant, a school, and a doctor's office.

* On April 5th authorities discovered a Family Tree Log. The document is called "Father's Family Information Sheet", it lists several older men living at the ranch with under-aged teenage wives.
* On April 10 State Officially released information about beds discovered in the temple compound, which police say were used to consummate the marriage of young girls to an older men at the temple
* April 18- Judge ordered that the children stay in state custody.
* April 21- A judge ordered DNA tests be taken on all 437 children seized by the Texas authorities to help determine the parentage of the children
* Each child is represented by a lawyer. 416 children are represented by 350 Attorneys and the parents have their own lawyers.

* 40 mothers chose not to go back to the ranch, instead reside in a shelter for battered women.
* Parents from the Texas polygamist sect have been forced to live part time on the road in order to visit their children. Some of the children have been placed in separate foster homes hundreds of miles away.
* The children are being placed in group homes or other quarters until individual custody hearing can be completed by early June.
* The judge will soon determine whether 437 children remove from the ranch by CPS will be allowed to return to their home and to their parents or remain in the custody of the state.

~Janani.L~

Behind Bars

True Story

My name is Rohan Charles George and I am twenty three years old. I am a Christian and a Tamil Canadian. I am totally different from you yet undeniably the same. I am your friend ready to chill for better or for worse. I am your brother that likes Deva and Yesudas more than Pac and Biggie. I am that cousin you see hanging out at the mall. I am the guy you talk to on MSN at all hours of the night. I am that kid who sits behind you in Tamil class; I am that dude who sleeps behind you in math class. I am not an isolated case or an exception to the rule. I am not a statistic or a number. I am not a thug, a gangster or a career criminal. I was not born or bred to hate; nor am I a monster or a creep. I share more things in common with you than differences. I am the son of two shamed parents, brother of three caring sisters and currently a burden upon society. I am a convict.

I grew up an average Tamil Canadian Youth, yet I enjoyed skipping classes more than attending, drinking more than working, stealing more than buying and chilling more than anything. As a teenager, when I visited friends and acquaintances that had gone to jail for different charges, I would wonder what it was like inside. Wha they did when we left, how it looked and how they lived. My curiosities were laid to rest on January 17, 2005 when I entered jail as a prisoner for the first time at the age of 19. On the evening of the 14th my actions within a 15 second time frame changed my life, took someone else's life and destroyed many other lives. From that day forward I would become accustomed to the life of an inmate; court appearances and searches, lockdowns and jail guards, handcuffs and shackles, paddy wagons and courtesy flushes. I would learn to live on a range (cell block) made up of 10 to 20 cells (depending on the jail) and a day room, an area to eat, watch TV, shower and use the phone during the day. Cells are made up of a bunk bed, table, stool(s) and a sink and toilet. The cells are 12 by 6 feet. During my time in jail the three biggest factors that have affected me are the loss of freedom, loss of dignity and loss of time.

To be incarcerated in Canada is not so bad in the sense that you are almost pampered in comparison to other countries. There are three meals a day without fail. Clean bedding and clothing are supplied and access provided running water and showers. We are able to send and receive letters and have access to the telephone at certain hours. In a sense, being in jail in Canada is much like living in a communist country; you have everything you need – yet nothing you want. To live without freedom cannot be explained, only experienced. To imagine that you are confined to your room for a week would not compare simply because you can choose to stop imagining. You can say "game's over", "joke's over, I'd had enough". When a person has lost the freedom to choose they are forced to mature at an incredible rate. There is no friend or family, no strength or intelligence, no actions or words that can make the game end. There is no awakening from the nightmare. Subject to the same colours, surroundings and food consistently and continually does some significant damage to your mind and even more damage to your soul. To be told when and what you can and cannot eat, when you can and cannot sleep is not something the human spirit handles passively. It is not the circumstances themselves that affected me on such a grand scale. It's not the actual conditions, for as a Canadian prisoner I know I've living better than majority of the world's free population. It is the sole fact that I cannot choose. It is not the food that is so horrbie, bur the fact that I cannot choose to eat something else. It is not the fact that I have to be locked up at a certain time – but the inability to choose to be locked up at a different time.

Becoming fully aware of this loss of freedom did not come quickly for me. Like a drug taking its sweet time to travel through my veins, the realization of what I'd lost came agonizingly slowly. Like those frustrating moments when I felt like eating something – anything with spice- or listening to Tamil music or just hear another Tamil voice. As at the end of those much-anticipated 20-minute visits when I had to leave yet I'd just begun to talk to those I actually enjoyed talking to. On those mornings a year or two later when I'd just wake up from an amazing dream only to realize I'm still in jail and wanted to say "OK, OK, joke's over…".

These, though, are the least of your worries as a Canadian prisoner. Unlike the loss of freedom the loss of pride and dignity is felt immediately and severely. It is delivered from the mouth of the admitting officer who mundanely strips you of every ounce of pride and dignity you ever possessed with less than 8 words: turn around, spread your cheeks, touch your toes. During the 1200 some days of my incarceration I've heard this command countless times yet it is not something I am able to adjust to, become calloused towards, or remain unaffected by.

See page 13 "True Story"

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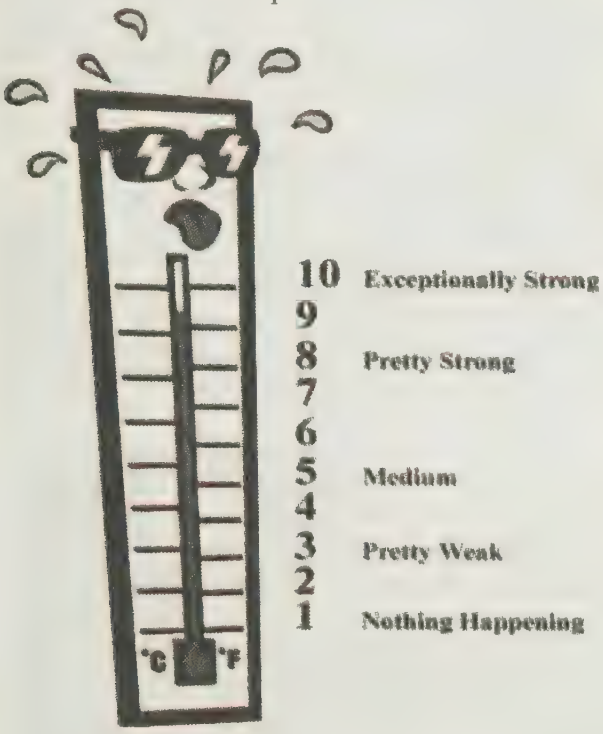
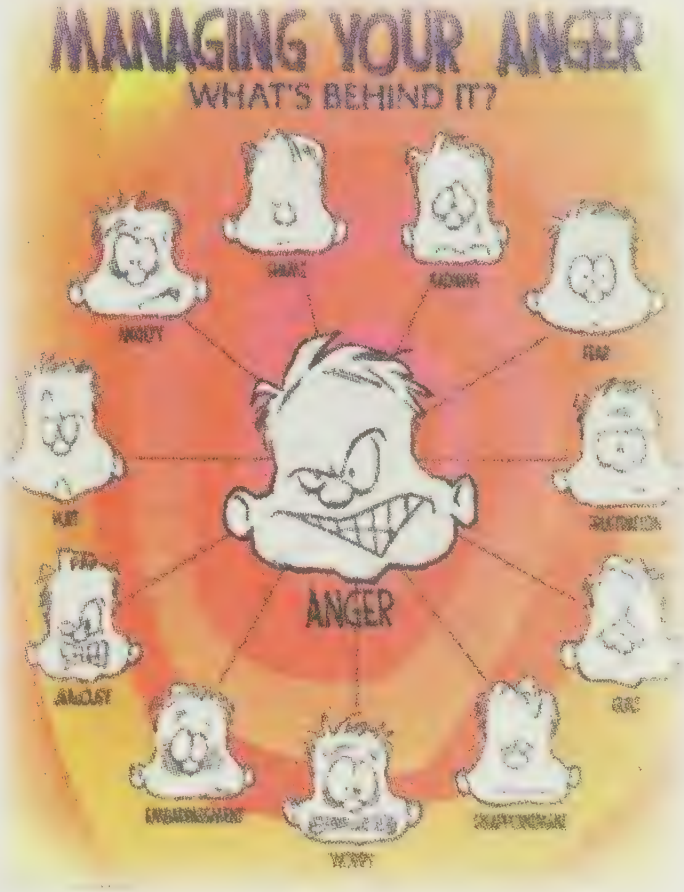
Anger versus you

Ever wonder why our society faces violence, relationship problems and other psychotic malfunctions? One of the factors contributing to these malfunctions is a powerful emotion called anger. Have you ever faced a moment in life when your anger has led you to do something you never thought you were capable of, and minutes later you are left with regrets? Of course, many of us have. However, to some of us it's only a minor issue while to others it is a major one. Take youth violence for example; it's sparked by children who fight or argue over something that can be verbally resolved but they find it difficult to control their temper.



The building blocks to these problems start with minor problems such as temper. In order to prevent major disaster, the baby issues should be taken seriously. How is it possible to emphasize the importance of this when some of us don't even know how serious this is? How about a change in the curriculum for a thought? Schools teach students various subjects that are beneficial to their daily lives; why not educate students about anger management?

While these anger management courses are offered to offenders on probation, the course is taken after the damage has been done. The smartest idea would be to prevent it when the problem is in its beginning stage and can be easily dealt with. It would be a good idea for a course like this to be offered to intermediate students in elementary schools, or even first year high school students. Preteens often undergo changes physically, mentally and socially and it would be appropriate to start controlling their tempers at that stage.



Take a minute and reflect upon your own life to see if out of control anger has affected you in any way. Think about whether the problem and the consequences weighed the same. How many problems can we prevent? Many, I would say!

It is important to control anger because it can lead to high levels of blood pressure and escalated heart rate due to stress hormones such as adrenaline and noradrenalin. It may be impossible to get rid of this emotion but it is definitely necessary to control it. Having unexpressed anger, on the other hand, can lead to other serious problems. Remind yourself that this out of control emotion will not end your problems but only make a bad situation even worse. Once you take the first step in identifying uncontrollable anger, you may be able to calm yourself internally.

Shobhini Francis-Xavier

Penis Pride – Penetrating the Male

-Violence against Women requires men to assume the " impossible", to assume the role of the other-

What one has may or may not represent what one is and what one is may or may not represent what one has: the relationship between the two is never settled and I acknowledge the tension between the biological and the social. However, for the context I am writing in, I will locate my argument within the binary and positioning myself as a male I ask all males to tackle the issue of the violence being committed by their own species against the opposite other. For the male, the female is the other and I am asking that males realize the worry; we ourselves could be in the position of the other and the pain being afflicted on women can soon find its form to inflict upon men.

I wonder what is it that motivates assaults on women and I am sure many around me wonder too. But what freezes me is the lack of attention the males are paying to the issue on hand. Are the assaults that are terrorizing the York community something that males need not worry about? How many males, outside the sphere of critical study and discourse, have taken to understanding the issue of violence against women? Very few, I am afraid and I now wonder why? Perhaps most men do have an opinion about the violence: but most often than not, the crime is attributed to the victim.

Why, I wonder? Why is it that males are refusing to be critical of the violence against women? I find a plausible answer in "Penis Pride" and I want to work with this very dynamic to penetrate a belief system in hope for a healthier perspective at York and for males in general.

The history of our being reveals a preposterous pride raging violently through the male species – a pride in its dominance in sexuality, gender and being in general. This "Penis Pride" raises males above and beyond the vices faced by those below and males have grown immune to the troubles being faced by women. Males refuse to take a moment to locate themselves in the position of the other and as such hardly every pay attention to the despicable acts that torment the lives of women. The pride manifests itself in a belief that the male is immune to societal ills and his dominant position places him firmly in control of his movement and existence. Women appear as the unfortunate lot who do not have what it takes to be safe in a society. Men, by virtue of a penis, are safe and secure; safe and secure enough to make women fear for their own safety and security. The penis is about piercing space and attacking; the male is not about defence. The penis does not allow for a male space to be explored and the male is firmly in control. Or so we are made to take pride in.

These males who roam and ruin York by assaulting women have forever shaken the lives of these women. Reaction at York to such assaults comes from many fronts but yet why many men have yet to surface at the lead of such positive reaction is to me nothing but a manifestation of this myth of "Penis Pride". Have males forgotten the simple idea that "that could be me"? Indeed they have, for men stand at the fort of society and believe their tracks to be covered and protected. Yet, when you realize that men themselves are causing pain to women, you realize a being whose existence is clothed in pretension. Males at York: we are not protected by virtue of what we are or have: we must see people for people, women as men and men as women and realize that violence against one is violence against the other!

However, penetrating the male mind is never easy: the ideology is engrained deeply and when bodies are called into being by the powers that be, reversing that effect is an uphill task. It is so because for the oppressor to assume the role of the oppressed is quite impossible. If it were so easy, would the oppressor ever exist?

The problem with males not speaking up in one voice against violence on women is purely about the inability of males to see themselves as possible victims. For this problem to be resolved, males need to take a moment of deep reflection followed by powerful reaction. Education can facilitate the reflection, the reflection that should get males to see the humanness in the humans around them. But then before an education, males must murder the pride. Males have been made to suck in an ideology that places them at the top most and this ideology is precisely what blinds us from viewing the circumstances of those "below". If only we saw people as people, things for things and reality for reality.

I understand that I may be guilty of assuming that most males are uninterested in critically examining violence against women. But if you think about it, even the males who suggest solutions always think of actions after the event of violence rather than before. It is as though a woman is to be shown her place through violence. This pride is false, mystifying and insulting. Males reading this, realize that this pride whose air we comfortably breathe does nothing but to stratify our society and drunk us all with power. Attempt to imagine our species as being under the constant threat of violence and imagine yourself as bearing a beating each day for simply being.

When will we make visible the invisible?

When will confront the constructed conscience?

When will we begin?

Perhaps fire will have to fight fire and perhaps when a bunch of females begin to assault males we might see ourselves as the other. But wait, then we would be males no more, right?

How convenient.

Ali Abbas
ali@theeyecon.com

True Story

Cont. from page 09 "Behind Bars"

To be told to strip naked in front of another man and not being able to refuse is the pinnacle of humiliation and deprivation of rights and dignity. To have to defecate inside a 12 food cell while a stranger has his back towards you robs you of any dignity you may try to recover. To be spoken to in a degrading manner and treated as an animal, number, or commodity is easy to conceptualize or state in a matter-of-fact-way. Yet when you are actually subjected to degradation (and routinely considered less than human) there is a tangible effect on your spirit from which it rarely recovers. When we read of those who live without their rights, we at times feel pity and even compassion for them. Yet when we experience a taste of it ourselves, in the smallest degree, it stings worse than peroxide and curry powder poured on skinless flesh.

The loss of time is much like the loss of freedom, it is not felt daily but when it does, it hurts. Like Homer Simpson trying to jump the Springfield gorge on a skate-board and hitting his head along the way down, it is not a one time realization. Hitting your head all the way down a bottomless pit shouting "d'oh!" at every collision is the most accurate example I can provide. Upon entering custody I had this notion that the world revolved around me. When I phoned my friends of family (collect) I expected them to answer right away. When I asked them to do something I expected them to have it done immediately. If they failed to do that thing or were delayed in doing as asked – I would be angry. It hit me at some point, though, as it is sure to hit every prisoner. It might have been as I

peered through the little holes for a window, in the paddy wagon, at the outside world while being driven to court…noticing how no one took note of me and still went about their business. It might have been as I noticed my mom was getting older during one of her visits or it may just have been while I lay on my bed staring at the ceiling contemplating my life's worth. But hit me it did. "The world keeps on turning" is a fundamental truth every prisoner must come to terms with. Within prison walls is like the Twilight Zone, an entirely different dimension of existence where the familiar concepts of space and time become twisted beyond recognition. It is the movie Groundhog Day taken behind bars without the happy ending. Nothing changes. Same faces, same food, same card games, same chess games. Same routine day in and day out. The "same old, same old". From the minute you are arrested your world is put on hold. Individual days no longer have meaning. Christmases mean little…birthdays mean less. The only thing that matters is court dates and it was a rude awakening when I realized my life was the only one that had been put on hold. That the world outside continued to spin uninterrupted. Everyone had their lives to live and they continued to live them. It is you and you alone stuck in the Twilight Zone.

The days passed, as did the weeks…and months…and years. I stopped counting.

In a way this was good, because I didn't clearly understand how much time was going by- that is until I'd see a commercial for a movie that sounded good being advertised as coming to theaters that summer. Then see it being advertised on DVD; then on City TV. Then there were the times I heard of younger cousins attending university of cousins my age getting married. Or worse, when I'd hear news of my sister's wedding; then of her baby; then of her baby growing older. What's sad is, at first I actually took pride in counting the days. At 30 days, assuming I'd be out on bail soon I was proud that I'd spent 30 days in jail. GANGSTER! I was really solid now. I officially had street credit. I could now start singing "locked up" and "vaanaththai paarthain " with pride when I got out. *I done did time already.*

The days passed, as did the weeks…and months…and years. I stopped counting. Every once in a while I may pull out a calculator and a calendar to see how long I've been in. There's no more pride though. Pride was replaced with pity, surrounded by grown men and mashed potatoes as some of the best years of my life passed me by.

See page 19 "True Story"

Adventures of a Travel Addict

Korean life has been good to me, especially when I moved here not knowing what to expect.

I am now living in my own apartment which is a typical Korean style studio/bachelor where everything is very compressed – only 2 stove tops, no microwave, and a washer and dryer combo which is in the kitchen! It's a huge change from North America where everything is so big and grand. I don't mind it much though because cleaning is much easier and it's very cozy.

I am still having moments where I forget I'm in a foreign country because Seoul is immensely international. 1% of the population is foreigners so living in Seoul is not as difficult as most Asian cities. I have yet to venture into the country side though, where it's much more traditional and there is usually only one foreigner for miles.

Seoul is a big city which I'm still learning about. You can always find a new restaurant or bar every day because of the alley streets that make up the dongs (neighborhoods). Everyday can be an adventure!

South Korea is also a small country so going from Seoul to any other city or town is normally under 4 hours by bus or train and relatively cheap.

The great part of traveling is the small things. Koreans are known for their kindness. I was extremely concerned about how Koreans would react to me due to their stigma on colored skin. I was fortunately surprised after arriving here about how interested they actually are to learn about differences (keep in mind that this is based on my personal experiences that I have come across). They are not as keen to embrace it, but only because this is a mono-cultural society that still has much respect for the traditional ways. It's also natural to fear the unknown, so a lot of the negativity concerning this culture is really just misunderstanding. You encounter prejudice in all walks of life, but the way you deal with it is what makes the difference.

Kindness is a part of Korean Culture

Overall Koreans really do appreciate foreigners who show interest in their language and culture, just like people from any other culture that take pride in who they are.

It's amazing how many of them try to communicate with me through actions and minimal words simply because they want to make me feel comfortable rather than kicking me out of their store or ignoring me. These are also people that don't have to make that initiative, like the lady at the kimbab (a Korean dish – rice, veggies and ham rolled in seaweed) store who wanted to tell me I had a pretty face and the man in the elevator who was curious about where I was from and what grade I teach.

The language barrier has never affected me this much before, so this is also a new experience that has made me really want to learn Korean so that I can communicate.

Koreans also love to go out of their way not only to make you comfortable, but also to help you. My Korean classroom assistant that I work with is always willing to help me. She took me shopping for blinds just because I asked her where I could find them. Instead of telling me where I could find them, she took me shopping and treated me to dinner.

As I was waiting for the bus in the rain without an umbrella, an older Korean lady came and stood beside me with her umbrella and shared it with me. I was shocked and taken by her kindness. It's a simple act that I have never experienced before which only makes my love and respect grow for Koreans and their culture.

You can read more on my travels at
www.annjaimi.com
(follow the links to my travel blog)

Want to share your Travel Adventure with the world?

email
info@theovecon.com

Pictures of Seoul, Korea

Cherry blossoms in Seoul .. spring is here!

Korean food

silkworm larvae.. a very popular Korean snack sold on the streets.

Shine

JUNE 2008

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BY: SALINI FRANCIS XAVIER

[illegible] 12 years old Stella Kingston. Stella is a grade seven student at St. [illegible] Catholic Elementary School. The [illegible] photo [illegible] with the camera at a young age has led her into [illegible] skills has [illegible] her [illegible] and [illegible] her photos to be sold at the [illegible] Gallery. [illegible] to attend the [illegible] event.

EYE: First and foremost I'd like to congratulate Stella on behalf of The Eyecon. It is great to see young individuals achieve such big dreams. This surely encourages many young people to believe that anything is possible if you would put your mind to it. But tell us first, which school are you attending and what are your favourite subjects?

Stella: I attend St.Boniface and my favourite subjects are art and science. My goal is to become a professional photographer one day.

EYE: I think you are already taking the right steps toward achieving your goal. What or who inspired you to become a photographer?

Stella: My influences were actually my family and friends. At any given event, even before I started taking classes, they will let me take their photos; even on vacations, walk to the park, or around the house. They would often tell me how I take good pictures. I'm not sure if they were just saying that to be nice, but it did inspire me and brought me to where I am today.

EYE: They absolutely knew what they were talking about. How were you selected to sell your photos at the Bluffs Art Gallery? How did you feel about it?

Stella: Well, I got involved by taking pictures for class. Our photography teacher, Ms. Christina Da Silva took us on trips to the beach, the park and lots of other places just to snap pictures in order to see how well we can capture and present something so simple in photos. Finally, one day, she chose outstanding photos by every student, which she believed was worth presenting to the Bluffs Art Gallery. The Gallery used to be a house but now used as an art gallery, on Birchmount & Kingston. A photograph that I had taken was one of them. I was thrilled! My friends and family were really proud of me. I felt like a mini Leonardo!

EYE: That's a good nickname for you! Tell us what took place at the day of the event?

Stella: The event took place on Thursday, April 10th at 6:00pm. My family and friends came to see my pictures and on that day I received a certificate from the Toronto School Board, my principal and Ms. Christina Da Silva. It was really exciting. But I think the most exciting part was my picture was up for $125.00! I couldn't believe it myself. I felt proud of how I actually accomplished something and even received an award for it. It was a good experience for me that and I will never forget it.

EYE: That's amazing! This experience should encourage you to keep up the good work and to continue enhancing your skills to achieve your goals. Are your photos still at the gallery and are they for sale? Can anyone go and take a look at the photos?

Stella: Yes, the gallery will be open for another two weeks for the public to view the pictures.

EYE: What are your plans to do with your first sale?

Stella: If you're asking me what I'm going to do with the money, I have already donated it to my school. If I were to spend it on something, I guess I would have bought myself a new camera. However, I realized that it can make a difference for the school. They are in need of it and I feel better knowing that the money is

going toward something useful for my schoolmates. My friends were looking at me like I was crazy. Then later they did the same. I had to think twice about it, but after talking to my family, I knew it was the right thing to do.

EYE: Wow! You're not only a young photographer but also a humane person. I would be tempted myself to spend it all, too. We need more people like you out there in this world! Do you have anything you would like to tell our readers?

Stella: Thanks. If you put your mind to anything, you can do it! You have to remind yourself this is a world of opportunities, your life is short and it is time to make a difference. More importantly, there is no time to think negative. You don't want to loose out on all the chances that are in front of you.

EYE: I am assured that our readers will find inspiration in your words and be proud of your achievement. Like you said, it is time that we all get up and start making a positive difference, because it's now or never. Is there anything else you would like to say as we wrap up?

Stella: Yes, I would like to thank my photography teacher Ms. Christiana Da Silva for teaching me everything I know about photography and for selecting me for this amazing experience! Lots of children dream of this chance, but I was lucky enough to be part of it. I want to thank my family and friends for their support and I know they will always be there for me, too. If they believe in you, you can accomplish so much! And I am lucky for that, too. And this is just a small quote I wrote for my biography, which was displayed at the gallery; "My mind is a like a camera; it holds memories for life. My eyes are like the lenses that capture those memories."

EYE: Beautiful! Thank you for joining us Marie Stella and we wish you all the best in the future.

editor@theeycon.com

Home Staging 101

(Home Stager & Interior Decorator for Design Contours)

Have you heard the comparison of speed dating to buying a home? Just like trying out the prospects in a date setting, many potential home buyers would go in and out of a house on sale, but it only takes a second before they decide a particular home is the one. Rarely is this effect achieved without the home being staged to attract and appeal to a wider audience.

Home staging has become more and more popular as people realize the benefits of making a home presentable for sale. Selling faster in a time of buyer's market and selling high during a seller's market are but only a couple of incentives to hire a home stager. Wouldn't we all like to save ourselves the hassles and headaches of having our home on the market for weeks on end? Imagine having to constantly keep the house clean for those weeks to receive unexpected and sudden potential buyers, making sure the aroma of cooking doesn't linger around in time for any unexpected visits, eating too many takeouts, putting away the toys even before the kids have finished playing with them, in fact, hiding them so the place doesn't seem cluttered…a few days of this is enough to take a toll on us, but weeks of this is enough to take down the 'home for sale' sign on our lawn and unpack our boxes and decide to stay put.

Here are a few home staging tips to consider when selling your home to make the process enjoyable and worthwhile, courtesy of Subi Shehaan:

De-clutter - All home stagers will agree that the number one and obvious way to make a home attractive is to de-clutter. Putting away toys, those adorable dog cushions, magazines, having the kitchen counter devoid of all knick-knacks all contribute to a cleaner looking space. Coffee tables should only have a centre piece on it, glass display cases should only show off a few selected items and surfaces should be clean and gleaming. Less is best when it comes to showing your home.

Fix 'em up! - If there are any minor fixer uppers, make sure they're all done. The cost of fixing minor dents on wall or a loose doorknob is much less compared to potential buyers turning their noses down at such easy fixes. Hanging a painting on a wall will hide any small damages, and is a quick fix if time is an issue.

See page 23 for more of

Home Staging 101!

True Story

Cont. from page 13 "True Story"

I am in no way stating here that I am helplessly innocent victim being treated unjustly. I am not a political prisoner or a prisoner of war. There was no great cause or purpose for which I was fighting for. There were no noble motives even in the vaguest sense of the word. I was not defending my sister's honor, avenging my father's death or trying to acquire money to feed my starving family. I committed a senseless crime in the most real sense of the word and am now subject to the Canadian Justice and Penal systems. I am state property. This though, does not change the reality of the prison experience. My purpose here is not to rally sympathy or pity for myself in any way. For God's grace has turned this stumbling block into a stepping stone in my life. My task at hand is to, at least in the smallest, most indiscernible way; deter another youth from the path he is traveling to this very place – or any more like it. It's been said that there are no shortage of prison beds or cells, Crowns ready to prosecute or Judges willing to sentence. My hope is that, by sharing a glimpse of prison experience, it would cause something to stir within you. Not a fear or paranoia – but an awareness that there are very few things on this planet that are worth enduring such affliction for.

As a youth, a lack of my own identity caused me to over-identify with those of my peers. A lack of conscience caused me to pervert and twisted my every thought, word and deed. A feeling of disillusionment caused every truth to seem like a cliché, wisdom to sound like hypocrisy and sound advice to seem like incessant nagging. It took me more than three painstaking years traveling through Canadian detention and correction centres to come to a point where I could identify my real problems. I hope and pray no other Tamil Canadian has to endure the same thing to reach the same conclusion. The cynic and skeptic in me beg to differ. It tells me that the very ones in need of this message will fail to read this, dismiss me as a hypocrite or stubbornly choose to suffer the "nerrappai thottu thaan paarkonum" syndrome. I cannot say much to this, for that is exactly what I'd have done four years ago. Still – still I choose to light a single candle rather than despair at the darkness. A small word to the wise for any that will choose to hear is: it takes a wise man to learn from his own mistakes, yet it takes a wiser man to learn from the mistakes of another. As a Tamil, I can –we can Try and Aspire to be More In Life. As a Canadian we have the opportunity to do so. My forefathers were kings. I am a convict. We need more kings. Not more convicts.

Rohan Charles George
rohan@theeyecon.com

Birth Control Methods:

Which One is Right for You?

The choice to have sex is one decision that many young individuals are faced with. The choice is ultimately up to you and involves you to make very important decisions as to how ready you feel, who you choose to have sex with and what measures you are willing to take to prevent a pregnancy and a sexually transmitted infection (STI). If you feel you are ready to have sexual intercourse, make sure you take the appropriate safety measures to ensure you and your partner practice safe sex.

The choices you have for pregnancy prevention may seem overwhelming and endless. It may be a tiring process to understand all of them. Keep in mind each method has its advantages and disadvantages, thus you should choose the one that best fit's your needs and expectations. When choosing the right type of birth control, you should consider your age, the type of commitment involved, effectiveness, costs, side effects, protection and your personality. The information provided here will give you a general idea of some of the birth control methods that are available to you. You should speak with your Health Care Professional to determine the best method to meet your individual needs.

In better understanding how these methods work, it is important you have a general understanding of how the menstrual cycle works. A woman has two ovaries, one on each side of the uterus. Each month, one of the ovaries releases an egg into a fallopian tube. This is called ovulation. It usually occurs about 12-14 days before the start of the menstrual period. A typical menstrual period lasts about 28 days before repeating itself. If a sperm meets an egg in the fallopian tube, fertilization, joining of an egg can occur. The fertilized egg then can travel to the uterus and attach to the lining. Once the fertilized egg has attached to the lining of the uterus, the woman becomes pregnant, even if it is her first time having sex (ACOG, 2007). A woman is most fertile and likely to get pregnant 4 days prior and 2 days after ovulation. It has also been estimated that the sperm can live inside the vagina for up to 5- 7 days.

Most teens that use birth control use either barrier or hormonal methods. Barrier methods typically involve condoms and spermicides, while hormonal methods include; the pill, the patch, the vaginal ring, the shot, or the implant. As a teenager, you need to make sure you understand how your birth control method works and how to use it. Thousands of teenagers get pregnant each year because they either don't use birth control or use it inaccurately.

For an excellent contraception guide, please see www.sexualityandu.ca.

Did You Know?

- 25% of young women who have intercourse without using birth control will get pregnant in one month.
- 85% will become pregnant in one year!

Common Sex Myths

The following things DO NOT stop you from getting pregnant:

Douching — Squirting water or any other liquid into the vagina after sex does not kill sperm or prevent pregnancy.

Plastic wrap instead of a condom — Plastic wrap or a plastic bag can tear and let sperm escape.

Urinating right after sex — Urine does not pass through the vagina so it does not get rid of the sperm.

Having sex in a special position — No matter what position you have sex in, if the penis enters or comes close to the vagina, you can get pregnant!

(Courtesy of The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, http://www.medem.com)

See Page 30 for some of the available birth control options.

Technology & Business often work together hand in hand. Today, when we say Business or Technology the first thing that comes to mind is Computers, Televisions, Robots or some sort of automated device that replaces manpower. A hidden evolving technology that's quite vastly advancing is the automotive industry. As we all know May is the "BIG BOOM" for car audio enthusiasts and there are many different road shows and training that are provided by major vendors across the globe. These major vendors include Pioneer, Alpine, JVC, Panasonic, Sony, JBL and JL audio. Car audio has always been a big grasp for many business people because it's one of the major markets that help people add some "cool factor" to their cars and even their lives.

Pioneer Electronics is one of the leading competitors in car audio in the North American market. Pioneer's AVIC Z-Series has set the standard for in-dash navigation devices over the past couple of years, and so the release of a new line of a new family of products in the AVIC series is big news for car tech fans. The line-up starts with the entry-level AVIC-F700BT, which features a single CD/CD-R/RW playback mechanism, followed by the AVIC-F900BT and the AVIC-F90BT, which are both capable of reading MP3, WMA, iTunes AAC, and WAV audio formats as well as DVD, DivX, and MPEG4 video files. All of the F-Series include flash-memory-based navigation and the capability to deliver real-time traffic, weather, and gasoline prices via a connection to MSN Direct. Each of the three new in-dash units feature a 5.8-inch high-resolution WVGA touch-panel display; a USB interface for quick connection to iPod music players, portable media players, and USB memory devices; and an SD-card slot for loading additional Points of Interest information or compressed audio and video files. The devices also feature an advanced speech-recognition interface for hands-free calling and media playback selection. Developed by Voice Box, the voice-recognition system is able to understand conversational directions for making phone calls and selecting audio playback options. Pioneer claims that the interface can even discern a voice command that is complicated by pauses or hesitation, such as a command like: "I want to, ah, play artist, um, Black Eyed Peas." The suggested retail for this cool toy is about $850 to $1200 US.

JVC one of the underdogs in Car Audio has released a totally new innovation in car audio history. Nowadays the main trend in car audio is to integrate everything into one unit. Pioneer has done a very good job with their new F-series line up. Having all these technologically advanced gadgets in your car is amazing, but along with that also comes a threat to safety. May is the month for Car Audio's "big boom" along with higher theft rates as thieves concentrate mainly on cars with new and developed devices. JVC has released their new double din unit JVC KW-AVX810, which is full in-dash DVD, DivX, AVI, CD, MP3 Multimedia Receiver with USB, SD Card Slot, and Remote. It also has an available expansion for GPS, Sirius, XM, Blue tooth, iPod and also HD radio ready. The brilliant safety feature of this unit is that the double din face is detachable. Talk about a security innovation for double din units by JVC. This is a great product for those who do not have an alarm in the car or who fear investing in these new gadgets without an alarm because this will totally close the sale for any customer and give them the perfect peace of mind.

Home Staging 101

Continued from page 18

Refresh your house - Wash those walls of your kids' dirty fingerprints, and if it's too dirty to clean up, why not dress the wall up pretty with a new coat of fresh paint? Don't forget to have a mix of cinnamon, cloves and mint leaves on a gentle simmer on the stove to give off a fresh scent to the entire house.

Space it up! - During a home showing or an open house, make sure all your curtains are drawn to show off the exterior view, as often this makes a space appear larger.

De-personalize - Bathrooms should be devoid of any make up things on the counter. Hang up a new shower curtain. One trick I use all the time is to use a cheap shower curtain to hang on the inside of the tub (and should be replaced often) and an expensive fabric curtain on the outside to pick up the colors of your bathroom, and to add an interior decorator's touch to the space.

Portray comfort and elegance - Beds should be made up with lots of pillo -ws to instill the look of comfort. If your color scheme is bland, think about adding one vibrant color here and there: red pillows and one painting with a dash of red to mat -ch, or a chair with rich purple throw drap -ed on it. Dark and rich colors are what make bedrooms appealing.

Make 'em remember! – Aside from decorative aspects, a platter of crack -ers, grapes and cheese on the breakfast table will also surely put a potential buyer in a good mood, and maybe help them remember your house out of the many they visit.

Don't forget the outdoors! - We've all heard of curb appeal, and considering it's the first place anyone would have to pass before they enter the home, it makes sense to turn our attention to the porch and surrounding landscape. In the winter, make sure snow is shoveled and walkway is clear to prevent accidents. Have the porch lights on if the home showing takes place during the night (don't forget to also turn on ALL the lights inside. This is what will make your home glow from the outside and give an air of warmth even before anyone enters your house).

In the summer months, make sure you plant flowers, rake the leaves, trim the hedges, mow the lawn, place a couple of porch chairs and a table with fresh flowers, and maybe even hose down the porch to clean the front door and surrounding steps.

Get the real estate agent working for you - Make sure you ask your real estate agent to place a 'please remove your shoes' sign near the front door. This will also tell the buyers that this home is clean and they will feel much more comfortable padding around in their socks.

As you can see, it's the little things that matter and make a huge impact! They should not be overlooked if you are to maximize on your home's potential to attract the right buyers. The above are but a few examples of preparing a home for a faster sale and at a higher price. Happy selling!

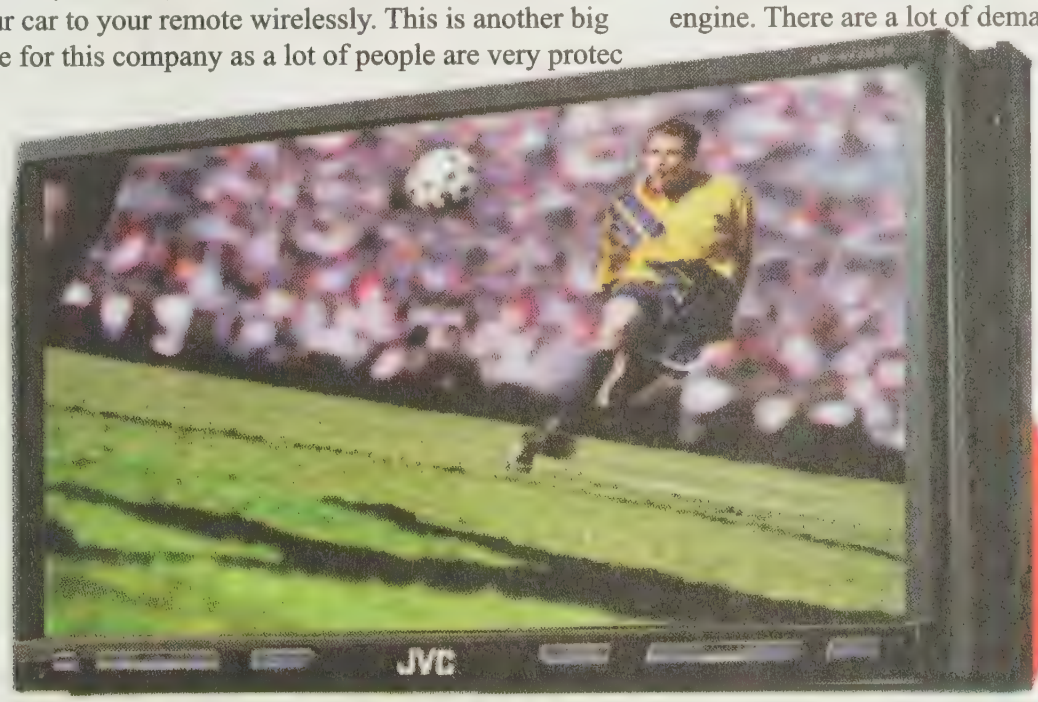
Subi Shehaan is an experienced home stager with an international staging certificate (ISRP) and also an interior decorator for Design Contours. For more information, please visit www.designcontours.com

savvydetail.com styleitsellit.com
theartofhomestaging.com, aspencountry.com, hansonellis.com

Nimalan's Bus Tech

Continued from page 21

Some other new and impressive products are to be released by DEI (Directed Electronics INC), who makes Viper, Clifford alarms and remote starters to release another new innovation in car security. The new models of Viper will have real time video surveillance on the car pager remotes. How this is going to work is that the transmitter in the car will have a built in camera, which works like the camera in your cell phone only to transmit what's going on in your car to your remote wirelessly. This is another big release for this company as a lot of people are very protec



tive of their cars and this will give every consumer peace of mind. DEI is working on expanding the range in their transmitters to carry the wireless video feed to the pager remotes and the new estimated range for these units are expected to be anywhere from 1 mile range to 3 miles.

Garmin and Tom Tom, the top dogs in portable GPS world wide, once again compete with one another for another season. Garmin who is a North American based company just released some of their new line up of GPS's. Their new and improved GPS includes a much faster processor in calculating those missed routes faster, bigger screen, stronger reception and fewer dropped signals. Garmin continues to initiate new products by adding a portable GPS security system built in to their device which should be interesting to see in their new up coming devices. Tom Tom has done very well, being a European company, to have a competitive edge in the North American market. Tom Tom has doubled their market share in the portable GPS in the past year and still is growing rather rapidly. Some new models we can expect from them are the new GO730 and GO930. Both units will now feature a voice recognition and traffic report built in. Customers will now no longer require punching in their address, instead they can just speak it and it will pick up where you want to go. The traffic report was only available in major cities such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, but later this year it will be available in all of Canada.

Car Audio is a huge part of business that generates a lot of hype. It is very fast growing and changing and very hard to keep up with. The main profit driver for car audio is in the services. All car audio requires installation and integration into your car. We all know that cars today are nothing like the cars of 10 years ago. Everything is built in with fiber optic data transfer and computerized from your tire pressure to the whole mechanical function of your engine. There are a lot of demands for people who work and study in this

field. It's always interesting to see what the future has in store as technology is always changing and new things always build excitement for everyone.

Got any comments, concern or suggestion please feel free to email at **Nimalan@theeyecon.com**

NEED A BREAK?

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Last Months answers are on page 7!

8	3				9	6		
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source:www.saidwhat.co.uk

	3			8	5			2
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Sudoku rules are extremely easy: Fill all empty squares so that the numbers 1 to 9 appear once in each row, column and 3x3 box.

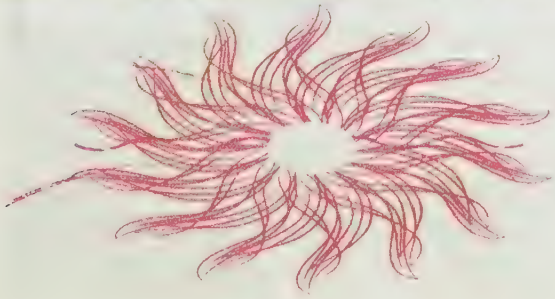
Send in your answer to editor@theeyecon.com to win a chance to receive one year of free Eyecon sub scription!

the Opinions of two Journalists on things that matter

Teen Pregnancy: An accident or a result of careless upbringing?

T: People make mistakes, right? I mean contraceptives don't always work. We've heard of those small accidents that have big repercussions…like a baby for example. But lately, we're seeing a lot of teenage girls getting pregnant and openly so. To name one, in particular, Jamie-Lynn Spears is pregnant at 16 and has chosen to keep the baby. Ok, so a 16 year old deciding to take responsibility for her actions and agreeing to raise the child instead of aborting it is admirable. But, why is a 16 year old having sex? Not only are these teenagers having sex, they are sexually active with their boyfriends, who in most cases are teenagers themselves. And this is apparently acceptable and normal. This issue has been researched to no end and some professionals have found that it stems from psychological issues in the teenage girl and her upbringing. In Jamie-Lynn's case, this may not be far from wrong as we can see from Britney that something could have gone wrong with the upbringing. But are these teenagers truly psychologically disturbed and yearning for some attention that they are agreeing to sex at such a young age, or are our youth just growing up too fast and having sex because they want to although they have been brought up in a healthy environment?

J: Women.. or in this case, teenage girls getting pregnant at a young age is nothing new. Throughout history women were meant to pro-create and be a good mother, which was their sole purpose of life. The difference with contemporary times is that women have the opportunity to make that choice, to have a stable future before starting a family the 'right' way, or to follow their hormones and/or peer pressure and deal with the unplanned consequences. Even with numerous types of contraceptives that are easily accessible, the age old issue of teen pregnancy does not seem to be diminishing. It's always easy to look for someone to blame for this such as upbringing, education and role models (especially celebrities!), but shouldn't we really be looking at ways to prevent this issue from occurring time and time again? Especially because a teen pregnancy isn't just about raising a child at a young age; it contributes to society on such a larger scale such as with increasing poverty levels, school drop out rates and alcohol/drug abuse. What people often forget to consider is the ripple effects of their actions, which in this case is something that can haunt a girl for so many years. So the big question is what have we NOT yet done to prevent this from happening to our own children and the generations beyond us?



Have an opinion to share? Mail it to
editor@theeyecon.com
subject: Opinion

Gemini May 21 - June 21

The pain you have caused someone will come back around to get you one day in one form or another. This birthday make a change, a good change.

Cancer June 22 - July 22

Close your eyes and make a wish. Now open your eyes and make it come true!

Leo July 23 - August 22

You have lost yourself and you are being too hard on yourself. Snap out of it and realize with one roar you can put it all back together again.

Virgo August 23 - September 22

Its time to make a move. You will not lose anything unless you fail to make the first move.

Libra September 23 - October 22

Pick up those books and do your own research. Don't just listen to one opinion, open your ears and eyes and form your own.

Scorpio October 23 - November 21

As a good friend you are to others, be a good friend to yourself first. You need yourself as much as others need you.

Sagittarius November 22 - December 21

This month make a difference. Start at home. Show your loved ones how much they mean to you. Do little things that you normally would not do. Be spontaneous! Also, put a smile on someone's face.

Capricorn December 22 - January 19

Diet is not going to help you shed that excessive weight if it does not include food. You have to be able to balance your food, and daily activities to see any improvement.

Aquarius January 20 - February 18

Get together with few of your best friends and enjoy a night out this month. You deserve it after a whole month of endless work.

Pisces February 19 - March 20

Relax and stop stressing. You have put a lot a thought into a situation which would make no difference. Put your energy to better use. There are more important issues that need your undivided attention.

Aries March 21 - April 19

You think too highly of yourself. It is good to be confident and sure of yourself, but too much flattery is going to hurt your social life. Everyone has a flaw, that's what makes everyone unique.

Taurus April 20 - May 20

You don't know how to appreciate people and you have not been grateful to those that have served you all your life with all their love. This birthday instead of treating yourself, treat them.

Ask Eyecon!!!

Do you have a question or concern that you want to talk to someone about? Send an anonymous email to ask@theeyecon.com

Your Question...

Dear Eyecon,
I am a 15 year old high school student. I have been going out with a guy (age 17) for a year but he has broken up with me several times within the year. A few months ago I found out that I am pregnant. I talked to my boyfriend and he said that whatever I decide to do, he will support me. My friends are telling me not to trust him, considering that he did break up with me in more than one occasion. I don't know what do you, please help me.

Sincerely,
Heartbroken.

Sweet Hugs

Dear Heartbroken
It sounds like you have a serious decision to make. Having intercourse may not seem like a life-altering decision but it is a life creating process. You have your whole life a head of you so this is not a decision that you should be making based on what I say. I am going to ask you to think about one thing, whatever you decide make sure it is a decision you can live with. It doesn't matter if everyone else hates you, if you end up hating yourself – it becomes unbearable.

Stick Smack

Hello Heartbroken
What were you thinking? You are 15! Firstly, you should be walking with books not babies and aren't you too young to have intercourse? Since you and your man made the mistake accept your responsibility and have the kid but only IF you can do it on your own. Don't rely on your man and definitely don't expect your parents or his parents to help you out. Maybe your parents might be willing to help you out but the child is your responsibilit

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Yo Eyecon,
I recently moved into Scarborough from Barrie, I am a new kid and I'm trying to make friends. I finally found a group that I belong in and realized that they are all in gangs. I know its a bad idea but I really don't want to loose the only friends I have. I can't just walk away, what do I do?
-new kid

Dear new kid,
I would suggest that you make new friends. If your friends are in gangs and you hang around them a lot, it might not be too long before you get involved in their problems. Believe it or not, since you are a new kid, I'm sure as long as you are in good terms with everyone, you will make new friends easily. If you know that the people you are hanging around are up to no good, don't bother sticking around.

Hello new kid,
First of all, I understand that it is important to belong in a group. Just because they are in a gang, it doesn't mean you have to be part of it. But if you feel like they are going to force you to be in a gang, then they are not really your friends. It is better to have no friends than to have "friends" who force you to do things that you don't want to do.

WINNER LOSER

Critique inspired by
www. msn.com 'style winner/loser'

Beyonce

Thusha: I'm not a big fan of Beyonce's wardrobe – especially the god-awful clothes her mom designs for her – but I have no complaints about this one. The colour of this dress is electrifying and contrasts her golden hair really well. The deep neck shows just the right amount of cleavage and the pattern at the waist draws attention to her beautiful narrow hips. She looks like a perfect hourglass in this dress! Her long earrings and long wavy hair goes perfectly with this look. Kudos to Beyonce for putting together this smashing look.
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Winner**

Salini: Breath-taking indeed. She looks like a real life-sized Holiday Barbie doll or even a The Little Mermaid on land. The dramatic turquoise-green flourishing dress calls attention to her amazing curvature; eyes all gaze down towards her stunning dress giving her the thumbs up for looking so elegant and yet so simple. She did well this time, good for her!
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Winner**

Image: http://i240.photobucket.com/albums/ff208/Obsessed-Hoopla/STYLE/amas-06-beyonce-elie-saab.png

Jordan Sparks

Thusha: Jordan Sparks looks stunning in this black-laced neck flowing sleeved dress. Although she played it safe with black, the lace at the neck and the loose sleeves add a touch of difference and style to it. Her sophisticated black strap stilettos add to her look of perfection. I approve of this look on Jordan.
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Winner**

Salini: Oh boy! With Jordan's figure and beautiful face, she has to stop playing it safe. It's time for a wardrobe change and time to SPARK it up! Carrie Underwood's dress would have been the perfect look for this young icon. Maybe if there were no sleeves to cover half her arms, and the dress was two inches shorter, it could've passed with me.
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Loser**

Image: thetrendsetter.files.wordpress.com/2007/11/jo...

Mariah Carey

Thusha: The first thought that popped into my head when I saw this was what on earth was she thinking? She's Mariah Carey for heaven's sake – oozing with money and can afford any dress in the world, and she chooses this one. It doesn't flatter her one bit. It looks like an incomplete Hawaiian dress gone REAL bad. It makes her look like a raunchy porn star rather than the talented superstar that she is.
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Loser**

Salini: For once we agree. Is that her way of saying, "touch my body"? I cannot believe she walked out of her house thinking she looked perfectly fine wearing somebody's shower curtains twisted around her neck and body, barely covering anything. How can anyone remember how talented she is when all they can see is multi-coloured fabric running wild on her body? This just looks like a butterfly gone wrong.
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Loser**

Image: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/photo.cms?msid=1103726

Kanye West

Ines:Since most of the male celebrities wear black suits to any event, I came across some spring fashion for the males strolling the side walks of GTA. I find this to be the perfect spring look. I also find a lot of male celebrities are wearing casual blazers over a cotton t-shirt. This look is prim and proper, a look that almost anyone can pull off. Although, I would suggest that he get rid of the long chain but since it's not oversized, he has managed to get away with it.
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Winner**

Thusha: Yeah, this pretty boy look is totally working for Kanye. The white blazer over the white v-necked t-shirt looks crisp and clean. I wish I could get a better look at the khakis but from what I can see, they too look great. I'm not a fan of white watches, but even that works well with Kanye's spring look. I just wish he would smile more often! – It definitely would have made this shot look even better!
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Winner**

Image: http://wmdeez.wordpress.com/2007/09/11/kanye-west-good-morning-lyrics/

Patrick Dempsey

Ines: Is it possible to find a flaw in this hunk? If he can look good in teal scrubs, he will definitely look stunning in a suit. The suit is perfectly tailored to fit his physique and the tie, as simple as it is, completes the outfit.
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Winner**

Thusha: McDreamy manages to look dreamy yet again. Maybe I'm being biased because I think Dempsey would look great in a potato sack – like you said Ines, he looks hot in scubs so a suit is no exception. I would have picked a different colour – not a huge fan of the shiny purpley blue. But he took a fashion risk here and I have to say he's pulled it off!
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Winner**

Image: http://justjared.buzznet.com/2008/04/21/patrick-dempsey-made-of-honor-premiere/

Ryan Gosling

Ines: Usually, I like the way this young Canadian lad dresses but this is a disaster. First of all, the colour clashes with his complexion, and the plaid is just not working with the colour. Overall, I am not impressed.
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Loser**

Thusha: Hmmm, I can kind of see where Ryan was going with this…but it just isn't where he wants to go. A plaid suit is a bit too risqué for me, but yet I can deal with it. A THREE piece plaid suit, on the other hand, is a little much. Maybe if the vest was a plain white or black, it could work, but this is just too loud for me. I respect Ryan for taking a fashion risk, but unfortunately it just doesn't work for me.
Decision: **Eyecon Fashion Loser**

Image:http://weblogs.variety.com/thompsononhollywood/images/2007/10/17/gosling46e687430007801ee[illegible]c68e1.gif

Got any comments, concern or suggestion
please feel free to email at fashion@eyecon.com

Here is a chart comparing some of the available birth control options.

Type of Method	How does it work?	Effectiveness? Side Effects?	Cost
Male Condom No Prescription Required	Polyurethane or latex sheath rolled over an erect penis & removed after ejaculation. Most effective when used with a spermicide.	Can protect against STIs, HIV and pregnancy. With perfect use, 97% effective in preventing pregnancy, 88% effective in typical use. Side effects associated with latex allergy.	$.50 to $1 each.
Female Condom No Prescription Required	Polyurethane sheath. Woman wears during vaginal intercourse. Can be inserted up to 8 hours before intercourse. Removed after intercourse, before the woman stands up.	Only method controlled by women that offers protection against STIs, HIV and pregnancy. With perfect use, 95% effective in preventing pregnancy, 75%-82% effective in typical use. Most common complaint is difficulty with insertion.	$2.50 to $5 each
Birth Control Pill (BCP) Prescription Required	Often referred to as the "pill," these are the most popular hormonal method. You have to take a pill around the same time every day. Tablet contains estrogen and progestin. Prevents ovulation so that no egg is available for fertilization. Birth control pills come in a large variety of types	When used correctly, 99.9% effective in preventing pregnancy. Does not protect against STIs and HIV. Side effects may include irregular bleeding, headaches, nausea and breast tenderness. Usually resolve after 3 months.	$7 per Package.
Depo-Provero (Shot) Prescription Required	Injectable. Contains progestin only. Contraceptive protection for up to 12 weeks. Need to only get the injection every 3 months.	Is 99.7% effective in preventing pregnancy. Does not protect against STIs, HIV. Possible side effects include irregular bleeding, weight gain and decreased bone density.	$30 per injection
Contraceptive Patch Prescription Required	Worn on the woman's skin (abdomen, buttocks, upper arm). Releases estrogen and progestin. Applied to the skin once a week for three weeks, followed by a patch free week.	When used correctly, 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. Does not protect against STIs and HIV. Only 92% effective in women weighing198 pounds or more. Side effects similar to those of BCP.	$10 per package
Intrauterine Device (IUD) Doctor Inserts	Plastic, T-shaped device with a copper wire. Inserted into woman's uterus by physician. Is most suitable for women who have already given birth. Must be replaced every 2-5 years.	Non-hormonal form of long-term contraception (5-8yrs). 98% effective in preventing pregnancy. Does not protect against STIs and HIV Can cause pain and bleeding after insertion	$50-150
Diaphragm Fitted by Doctor	A flat latex cap that fits against the cervix. Prevents sperm from entering the uterus. Must be used with spermicidal jelly and kept in place for 6 hours after intercourse.	When used properly, is 92%-96% effective in preventing pregnancy. Does not protect from STIs and HIV. Side effects associated with latex allergy.	$40
Spermicides No Prescription Required	Cream, gel, foam, film or suppository. Destroys sperm upon contact. Should be used in combination with other methods.	When used alone, is 79-94% effective in preventing pregnancy. Offers some protection against some STIs. Can protect against some bacterial infections. Can cause irritation of the vagina and penis.	$10 - 18
Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP) Prescription Required	To prevent pregnancy after failed contraceptive method or unprotected intercourse. Effective up to 72 hours after unprotected sex.	Can prevent 3 out of 4 pregnancies. Does not protect against STIs and HIV. Side effects can include nausea and vomiting.	$10 - 12

**Most of the above prices are based on the fee schedule as determined by the University of Toronto Health Services*

Sources:

1. Especially for Teens: Birth Control. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). 2007. Retrieved, April 29th, 2008 from, http://www.medem.com/MedLB/article_detaillb.cfm?article_ID=ZZZBRRU487C&sub_cat=12

2. A Guide to Contraception and Prevention. Which One is Right for You? University of Toronto, Student Health Outreach Program. Volume 8, Issue 3, 2005.

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Correction From May Issue:

[His name is Rick, and he's been waiting to hear from the vet if his 10-year-old German Shepherd 'Bear' has cancer.]

Photo by:
Louis Tam

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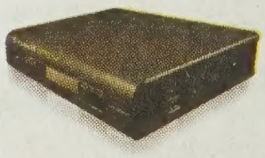

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